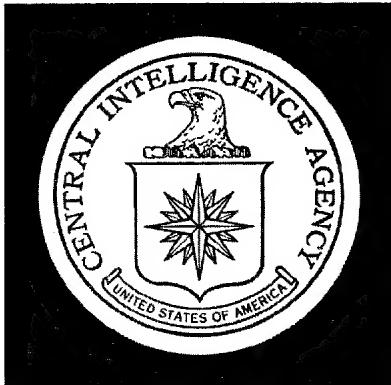


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Dept. review completed

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

Civilian political leaders in South Vietnam are beginning to voice concern over the campaign tactics of Premier Ky who, they believe, is utilizing questionable methods to advance his candidacy.

I. Military Developments in South Vietnam:
Heavy fighting on 17 June in Operation BILLINGS cost the Communists nearly 200 killed (Para. 1). Two other operations were launched and two terminated over the weekend (Paras. 2-5).

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II. Political developments in South Vietnam:
The Directorate promulgated the presidential and senatorial electoral regulations on 15 June (Para. 1). Premier Ky requested leave without pay from his air force command (Para. 2). Civilian politicians are becoming increasingly critical of Premier Ky's pre-election maneuvers (Paras. 3-5).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Polish politburo member Kliszko is reportedly in Hanoi on an official visit (Para. 1). Hanoi offers praise for China's H-bomb (Para. 2).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A battalion of the US 1st Infantry Division participating in Operation BILLINGS inflicted heavy casualties on an estimated Communist regiment in a stiff fight approximately 45 miles north of Saigon on 17 June. Initial reports indicate the enemy lost 196 killed in this battle. US losses were put at 33 killed and 107 wounded. The enemy unit involved may have been the 271st Regiment of the Viet Cong 9th Division. Cumulative enemy losses thus far in BILLINGS are nearly 400 killed, compared with 41 friendly killed and 190 wounded.

2. Two allied operations were initiated over the weekend. Operation GREELEY was launched on 17 June in Kontum Province northeast of the Dak To Special Forces Camp. No contact has yet been reported, although enemy forces in the area are estimated to total approximately 2,900. Several hours before the operation was launched, the Dak To camp received about 60 rounds of 82- and 120-mm. mortar fire. The enemy barrage inflicted casualties of 10 killed and 26 wounded.

3. On 18 June a US Marine battalion landing team initiated BEACON TORCH in the coastal areas of Quang Nam and Quang Tin provinces approximately 25 miles south of Da Nang. This search-and-destroy operation is expected to last 12 days, and commenced when the Marines launched a combined amphibious and helicopter assault onto the beaches of Quang Nam. The Marines are targeted against an estimated 3,800 enemy soldiers who are believed to be located within an eleven mile radius of the operation, but only sporadic contact has been made thus far.

4. Two other operations were ended this weekend. In Quang Ngai Province elements of the 2nd Republic of Korea (ROK) Marine Brigade terminated a search-and destroy operation--ANGRY DRAGON II--aimed at securing the ROK's tactical area of responsibility

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(TAOR) 7 miles north of the provincial capital. In the operation, the Koreans reported killing 159 of the enemy while suffering only 10 killed and 56 wounded.

5. On 16 June Vietnamese Army (ARVN) operation DAN CHI 289/A was terminated in Phong Dinh Province. In this operation units of the government's 21st Division were reported to have killed 210 of the enemy and captured 42 weapons including three crew-served weapons, while suffering only five killed and 33 wounded. The Communist losses were apparently inflicted upon the Tay Do battalion--one of the provincial battalions of the Viet Cong's Can Tho Province--and several district units. This operation may have pre-empted or delayed the reported plans of the Communists's provincial units to harass the areas around the province which are undergoing Revolutionary Development. Since the beginning of the year the 21st Division has assumed a more aggressive role in the southern Mekong Delta and has conducted a number of operations achieving a good measure of success.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. On 15 June, the presidential and senatorial electoral laws were promulgated by the Directorate. Missing from the Provisional National Assembly's earlier version of the regulations was the article requiring that presidential candidates be nominated by 30 elected representatives. The Directorate also changed the method of voting for senators: each voter will be allowed to vote for all sixty seats to be filled instead of only ten as originally proposed. The circumstances surrounding the latter change have not yet been reported but this new arrangement should enhance the chances of the strongest presidential candidate carrying his supporters into a majority of the senate seats. The elections will be held on 3 September and both presidential and senatorial candidates have only until 30 June to file their applications.

2. As required by the electoral laws, Premier Ky requested leave without pay from his job as commander of the air force, but he will remain as premier. Brigadier General Tran Van Minh, Ky's present deputy in the air force, will assume the command temporarily. Neither Ky nor Chief of State Thieu have named their vice-presidential running mates, but the US Embassy reports that Ky may have settled on chairman of the Peoples-Army Council, Nguyen Van Loc.

[redacted] Ky also told reporters on 17 June that he would announce his choice as prime minister before the election.

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Pre-election Political Climate

3. [redacted] there is growing concern on the part of most Vietnamese politicians that the elections will not be fair and honest if the present manipulation of the governmental administrative machinery by Premier Ky and his supporters continues unabated. The rigid press censorship by Ky's colleagues in the Ministry of Information, the replacement of police regional

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[REDACTED]

chiefs who are not in sympathy with his candidacy, the rumored possible replacement of similarly unsympathetic cabinet functionaries, and the alleged use of the Ministry of Information in posting signs and painted slogans throughout the country that the Ky government is the government of the poor have become widely enough known to arouse the collective ire of the civilian politicians.

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[REDACTED]

5. An adequate source of campaign funds has been the concern of nearly all of the presidential candidates, including Premier Ky.

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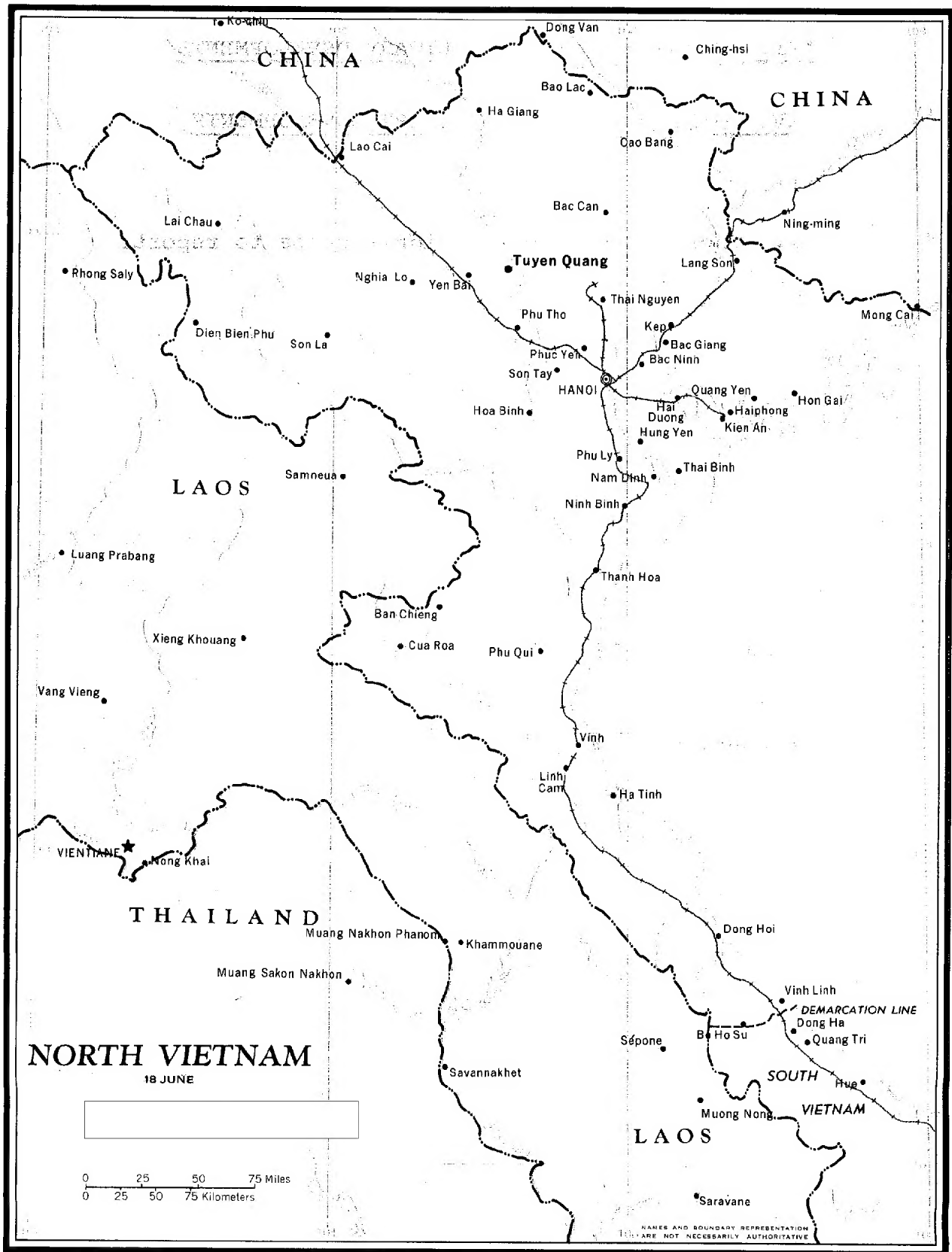
III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

25X1 1. The US Embassy in Warsaw has obtained information that politburo member Kliszko, number two man in the Polish party, left Poland on 14 June for a trip to North Vietnam.

Last year every Eastern European country except Poland sent a high-level delegation to Hanoi. The purpose of these visits generally is to demonstrate support for the Vietnam war effort, although the Eastern Europeans undoubtedly make every effort to take soundings on Hanoi's intentions in regard to negotiations.

DRV on China H-Bomb

2. Hanoi quickly hailed the explosion of China's first H-bomb, calling it a "great encouragement" in their fight against the US. The North Vietnamese "enthusiastically and proudly welcome this event," according to an 18 June Hanoi radiobroadcast. The broadcast characterized the new weapon as defensive, but pointedly linked the bomb with Chinese development of guided missiles.

Ho Reported Evacuated

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Ho has been out of sight since March and he often takes an extended vacation this time of year somewhere outside Hanoi.

4. There is no evidence that a decision has been made to have Ho permanently reside outside Hanoi.

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However, it is possible that such a move could be made due to air strikes in Hanoi. A likely location for an alternate headquarters for Ho would be in the area of Tuyen Quang, northwest of Hanoi. Ho and his lieutenants had their headquarters in this area during a good portion of their war against France.

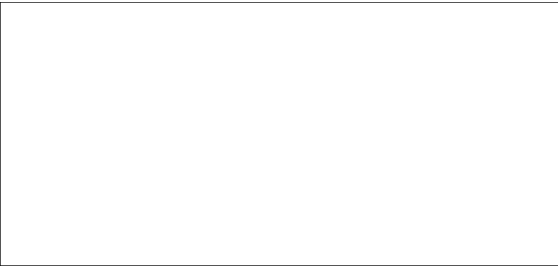
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